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U.S. colleges revise rules on free speech in hopes of containing anti-war demonstrations

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP)— As students return to colleges across the United States, administrators are bracing for a resurgence in activism against the war in Gaza, and some schools are adopting rules to limit the kind of protests that swept campuses last spring. While the summer break provided a respite in student demonstrations against the Israel-Hamas war, it also gave both student protesters and higher education officials a chance to regroup and strategize for the fall semester. The stakes remain high. At Columbia University, President Minouche Shafik resigned Wednesday after coming under heavy scrutiny for her handling of the demonstrations at the campus in New York City, where the wave of pro-Palestinian tent encampments began last spring.



A demonstrator waves a flag on the Columbia University campus at a pro-Palestinian protest encampment, in New York, April 29, 2024.

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Associated Press

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U.S. colleges revise rules on free speech in hopes of containing anti-war demonstrations

Continued from Front

Some of the new rules imposed by universities include banning encampments, limiting the duration of demonstrations, allowing protests only in designated spaces and restricting campus access to those with university identification. Critics say some of the measures will curtail free speech.

The American Association of University Professors issued a statement Wednesday condemning "overly restrictive policies" that could discourage free expression. Many of the new policies require protesters to register well in advance and strictly limit the locations where gatherings can be held, as well as setting new limits on the use of amplified sound and signage.

"Our colleges and universities should encourage, not suppress, open and vigorous dialogue and debate even on the most deeply held beliefs," said the statement, adding that many policies were imposed without faculty input.

The University of Pennsylvania has outlined new "temporary guidelines" for student protests that include bans on encampments, overnight demonstrations, and the use of bullhorns and speakers until after 5 p.m. on class days. Penn also requires that posters and banners be removed within two weeks of going up. The university says it remains committed to freedom of speech and lawful assembly.

At Indiana University, protests after 11 p.m. are forbidden under a new "expressive activities policy" that took effect Aug 1. The policy says "camping" and erecting any type of shelter are prohibited on campus, and signs cannot be



Columbia University President Nemat (Minouche) Shafik testifies before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing on "Columbia in Crisis: Columbia University's Response to Antisemitism" on Capitol Hill in Washington, April 17, 2024.

Associated Press

displayed on university property without prior approval. The University of South Florida now requires approval for tents, canopies, banners, signs and amplifiers. The school's "speech, expression and assembly" rules stipulate that no "activity," including protests or demonstrations, is allowed after 5 p.m. on weekdays or during weekends and not allowed at all during the last two weeks of a semester.

A draft document obtained over the summer by the student newspaper at Harvard University showed the college was considering prohibitions on overnight camping, chalk messages and unapproved signs.

"I think right now we are seeing a resurgence of repression on campuses that we haven't seen since the late 1960s," said Risa Lieberwitz, a Cornell University professor of labor and employment law who serves as general counsel for the AAUP.

Universities say they encourage free speech as long as it doesn't interfere with learning, and they insist they are simply updating existing rules for demonstrations to protect

campus safety.

Tensions have run high on college campuses since Oct. 7, when Hamas militants assaulted southern Israel and killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took about 250 hostages.

Many student protesters in the U.S. vow to continue their activism, which has been fueled by Gaza's rising death toll, which surpassed 40,000 on Thursday, according to the territory's Health Ministry. About 50 Columbia students still face discipline over last spring's demonstrations after a mediation process that began earlier in the summer stalled, according to Mahmoud Khalil, a lead negotiator working on behalf of Columbia student protesters. He blamed the impasse on Columbia administrators.

"The university loves to appear that they're in dialogue with the students. But these are all fake steps meant to assure the donor community and their political class," said Khalil, a graduate student at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs. The university did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

The Ivy League school in upper Manhattan was roiled earlier this year by student demonstrations, culminating in scenes of police officers with zip ties and riot shields storming a building occupied by pro-Palestinian protesters. Similar protests swept college campuses nationwide, with many leading to violent clashes with police and more than 3,000 arrests. Many of the students who were arrested during police crackdowns have had their charges dismissed, but some are still waiting to learn what prosecutors decide. Many have faced fallout in their academic careers, including suspensions, withheld diplomas and other forms of discipline.

Shafik was among the university leaders who were called for questioning before Congress. She was heavily criticized by Republicans who accused her of not doing enough to combat concerns about antisemitism on the Columbia campus.

She announced her resignation in an emailed letter to the university community just weeks before the start of classes on Sept. 3. The university on Monday began restricting campus access to people with Columbia IDs and registered guests, saying it wanted to curb "potential disruptions" as the new semester draws near.

"This period has taken a considerable toll on my family, as it has for others in the community," Shafik wrote in her letter. "Over the summer, I have been able to reflect and have decided that my moving on at this point would best enable Columbia to traverse the challenges ahead."

Pro-Palestinian protesters first set up tent encampments on Columbia's campus during

Shafik's congressional testimony in mid-April, when she denounced antisemitism but faced criticism for how she responded to faculty and students accused of bias.

The school sent in police to clear the tents the following day, only for the students to return and inspire a wave of similar protests at campuses across the country as students called for schools to cut financial ties with Israel and companies supporting the war.

The campus was mostly quiet this summer, but a conservative news outlet in June published images of what it said were text messages exchanged by administrators while attending a May 31 panel discussion titled "Jewish Life on Campus: Past, Present and Future."

The officials were removed from their posts, with Shafik saying in a July 8 letter to the school community that the messages were unprofessional and "disturbingly touched on ancient antisemitic tropes."

Other prominent Ivy League leaders have stepped down in recent months, in large part due to their response to the volatile protests on campus.

University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill resigned in December after less than two years on the job. She faced pressure from donors and criticism over testimony at a congressional hearing where she was unable to say under repeated questioning that calls on campus for the genocide of Jews would violate the school's conduct policy.

And in January, Harvard University President Claudine Gay resigned amid plagiarism accusations and similar criticism over her testimony before Congress. □

Lawmakers ask Pentagon leaders to commit to keeping the military out of politics and the election

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Members of Congress are pressing the Pentagon's top two leaders to ensure the military is not swept up in politics during the presidential election and that active-duty troops are not used illegally as a domestic police force.

The concerns come as the campaign heats up the first presidential vote since the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, aimed at preventing Joe Biden's victory from being certified.

Former President Donald Trump continues to claim that fraud cost him the 2020 election even though his own attorney general, recounts and investigations found no evidence of that. And he still faces charges of illegally conspiring to undo the results of the election.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, lawmakers asked the defense leaders to reaffirm that U.S. law prohibits forces from being used for civilian law enforcement and that they



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. CQ Brown, speaks during a hearing, May 8, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

should not carry out unlawful orders.

The letter, written by Democratic Reps. Elissa Slotkin of Michigan and Mikie Sherrill of New Jersey, mirrors questions posed in the run-up to the 2020 election when Trump was already suggesting that he might not accept the results of the election if he lost.

They point to Project 2025,

the ultraconservative blueprint for the next Republican White House, in underscoring fears that the military will be used to actively police the southern border. The nearly 1,000-page document includes startling proposals such as firing large swaths of the federal government workforce and disassembling longstanding agencies, including the

Justice Department.

While the document was organized by many of Trump's former aides, it is not a part of his campaign, which has its own series of proposals. Trump and his campaign have distanced themselves from the project and he's called some of the proposals extreme.

"In 2020, when the former President and others dis-

rupted the peaceful transfer of power, principled military leaders made it clear they would not help that effort and took an important stand for democracy," Slotkin said.

"Now, prominent leaders are once again declaring that if given a chance, they will use the military for their own political ends."

In the letter, she and Sherrill said they "feel compelled to look ahead to decisions that you, as the most senior defense officials, may be called upon to make in the next six months."

Slotkin is a former senior defense policy official, and Sherrill served as a Navy helicopter pilot.

When similar questions were posed to former Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley just a few months before the 2020 election, he responded bluntly, "I believe deeply in the principle of an apolitical U.S. military." And he added that, "In the event of a dispute over some aspect of the elections, by law U.S. courts and the U.S. Congress are required to resolve any disputes, not the U.S. military." □

Vance and Walz agree to a vice presidential debate on Oct. 1 hosted by CBS News

By MEG KINNARD

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) —

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and Ohio Sen. JD Vance have agreed to debate each other on Oct. 1, setting up a matchup of potential vice presidents as early voting in some states gets underway for the general election.

And Vice President Kamala Harris has forecast the scheduling of a second debate between Donald Trump and herself, although that matchup appeared to be contingent on the GOP nominee participating in an already scheduled Sept. 10 debate with Harris.

CBS News on Wednesday posted on its X feed that

the network had invited both Vance and Walz to debate in New York City, presenting four possible dates Sept. 17, Sept. 24, Oct. 1 and Oct. 8 as options.

Walz reposted that message from his own campaign account, "See you on October 1, JD." The Harris-Walz campaign followed up with a message of its own, saying Walz "looks forward to debating JD Vance if he shows up."

Vance posted on X that he would accept the Oct. 1 invitation. He also challenged Walz to meet on Sept. 18.

Officials with the Harris-Walz campaign did not immediately return a mes-

sage seeking comment on Vance's acceptance of the earlier debate that he said would be on CNN or whether Walz would participate in that one as well. Representatives for CNN confirmed that Vance had accepted the network's debate invitation.

"CBS Evening News" anchor Norah O'Donnell and Margaret Brennan of "Face the Nation" will moderate the Oct. 1 debate, according to the network.

Whether or not Walz and Vance would debate before the Nov. 5 general election had been in question. In just the past several weeks, President Joe Biden left the campaign and Democrats selected

Harris to lead their ticket. Vance has largely kept his focus trained on Harris, whom he would have been set to debate before Biden's departure

from the race. Vance has lobbed critiques against Walz, including questioning the retired Army National Guardsman's service record. □



Republican vice presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio speaks at a campaign event, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024, in Byron Center, Mich.

Associated Press

Federal agency says lax safety practices are putting New York City subway workers at risk

By KAREN MATTHEWS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The agency that runs New York City's subway system is putting track workers at risk by failing to follow its own safety rules, federal authorities said in an audit issued this week.

The Federal Transit Administration said in a special directive Tuesday that there is "a substantial risk of death or personal injury" because of unsafe conditions and practices in the subway system.

The FTA, an arm of the federal Department of Transportation, reviewed safety practices at New York City Transit after a subway worker was dragged under a train and killed on Nov. 29,



This photo, provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, shows work continuing in the tunnel near Court Square on the Crosstown G subway line, Aug 6, 2024, in New York, Associated Press

2023, and another worker was critically injured on June 6, 2024.

The FTA says there were 38 close calls in which a subway worker was almost killed or injured in 2023, up

from 24 close calls in 2022. Half of the near misses involved transit workers failing to follow established rules for flagging, the job of alerting train operators that workers are on the track,

FTA said.

The FTA is demanding that New York City Transit conduct a comprehensive safety assessment, submit a mitigation plan and undertake weekly internal monitoring of its safety compliance.

Officials at New York City Transit, which is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, said they would appeal the directive.

Demetrius Crichlow, the transit agency's interim president, said in a letter to the FTA Wednesday that agency officials "strongly dispute FTA's view that NYCT has somehow been negligent when it comes to addressing the safety of track workers, one of our most essential priorities."

Crichlow said the close calls that the FTA identified "have been thoroughly investigated to determine cause, so we can implement new or strengthen existing mitigations to prevent future incidents."

Crichlow said the Nov. 29, 2023 fatality and the June 6, 2024 worker injury are under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. "Given the unresolved status of these inquiries, it seems premature to infer that a 'combination of unsafe conditions and practices' led to those events," he said.

If New York City Transit does not follow with the transit administration's orders it could lose part of its federal funding. □

Florida election officials warn of false rumor about ballot markings days before the state's primary

By ALI SWENSON

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — An unfounded claim that election workers will invalidate ballots by writing on them is prompting election clerks in Florida to correct the record ahead of next week's state primary.

Clerks in Collier and Escambia counties, home to Naples and Pensacola, are reassuring voters that the warning that some have encountered on social media and in texting conversations is inaccurate and that ballot markings will not disqualify their votes.

Election officials say the claim, which has circulated online nationwide since at least 2020, is an example of the kind of misinformation that often spreads among well-meaning voters but threatens to erode trust in

the voting process.

The false claim comes as Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has primed his supporters, without evidence, to expect election workers and partisan actors to meddle with the results. Polls also show that confidence in election results is at historic lows.

The false claim has circulated both as copied-and-pasted text and as a screenshot of a text message shared on social media. It purports to come from a "poll manager" who recently completed a training. "I want you all to know something ... if you are checking in at the polls and they happen to write anything on your ballot before they give it to you to put in the voting machine ... a letter, a checkmark, a star, an R or a D any writ-



Elections assistant Mikayla Riley works in the processing center during early voting, Feb. 21, 2024, in Raleigh, N.C. Associated Press

ing of any kind ... please request a new ballot," the misleading warning reads. "Your ballot could be disqualified if it is written on." That verbatim claim has spread online and been debunked over the years in several states, including Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Depending on the jurisdiction, there can be legitimate reasons why an election worker might mark a ballot.

A recent fact-check from

the North Carolina State Board of Elections explains that election workers in some of that state's counties write voter precincts on ballots during early voting so they can be properly sorted after the election. Election workers in the state also write a number on mail or early in-person ballots, the fact-check explains. The number allows the ballot to be removed from the count if there is a successful voter challenge.

In Florida, election workers are trained not to mark

ballots. But even if they did, it shouldn't invalidate the vote, said Escambia County Clerk Robert Bender.

"We've had people write paragraphs to us on their ballot," Bender said. "Our scanners are looking for marks in certain areas. And so, if there's a mark in a bubble, then that's how the vote gets assigned to the voters."

He said when voters in his county get their ballot, they fill it out and take it directly to the tabulator that counts it. □

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More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, the territory's Health Ministry says

By WAFAA SHURAF and JULIA FRANKEL

Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, the territory's Health Ministry said Thursday.

Israel's offensive has also wounded 92,401 people and displaced over 85% of the population from their homes, the ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its toll.

The announcement came during yet another push from international mediators to broker a cease-fire in the war, now in its 11th month.

The conflict began Oct. 7 after Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people most of them civilians and dragging roughly 250 hostages to Gaza.

Israel says 111 of the captives have not been released, including the bodies of 39. The hostages include 15 women and two children under the age of 5. In Gaza, health officials have struggled to fully



Palestinians bury the bodies of people who were killed in fighting with Israel and returned to Gaza by the Israeli military, during a mass funeral in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024.

Associated Press

identify the dead as bodies stream into overwhelmed hospitals and morgues where they say the count is compiled amid the chaos of war and displacement. In its most recent detailed report on the dead, issued Thursday, the ministry said 40,005 people have been killed.

Health officials and civil defense workers say the true toll is likely thousands high-

er, since many bodies remain buried under the rubble of buildings destroyed in airstrikes.

Israel's air and ground offensive in Gaza has been one of the most devastating military campaigns in recent history.

The bombardment and shelling have killed entire Palestinian families. With cemeteries often unreachable, families fleeing Israeli

airstrikes bury their dead wherever possible in backyards, along roadsides and under the staircases of their homes.

Israel says it aims to eliminate Hamas. It blames Hamas for civilian deaths because militants operate in civilian areas and have built extensive tunnel networks underneath them. Israeli forces have regularly targeted mosques, schools,

hospitals and cemeteries where it claims fighters or tunnels are located, often causing civilian casualties. The fighting has also killed 329 Israeli soldiers. The Israeli military claims that over 17,000 Hamas fighters are among those killed in Gaza but has not provided evidence.

Nearly 85% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes, fleeing multiple times across the territory to escape ground offensives. During the war, thousands within Israel and in southern Lebanon have also been displaced.

The assault has created a massive humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The entire territory is at high risk of famine and over 495,000 people more than a fifth of the population are expected to experience the most severe level of hunger in the coming months, according to the latest report by the leading authority on measuring hunger.

Also, Gaza's sanitation systems have been destroyed, leaving pools of sewage and towers of garbage in tent camps packed with displaced families. □

Survey shows disaster-prone Southeast Asia is also best prepared, suggesting lessons can be learned

By DAVID RISING

Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Southeast Asia is among the regions most prone to natural disasters, but a new analysis released Thursday shows its people also feel the best equipped to deal with them.

It seems logical that the countries in and around the Pacific Ring of Fire, vulnerable to earthquakes, typhoons, storm surges and other dangers, are also the best prepared, but the survey by Gallup for the Lloyd's Register Foundation shows that's not always the case in other regions.

"Frequent exposure to

hazard isn't the only factor that determines how prepared people feel," Benedict Vigers, a research consultant with Gallup, told The Associated Press. The report found the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has played a key role in disaster risk reduction, and Vigers said the region's wider approach includes widespread and effective early-warning systems, scaled-up community approaches and regional cooperation, and good access to disaster finance.

"Southeast Asia's success in feelings of disaster preparedness can be linked to its high exposure to di-

sasters, its relatively high levels of resilience - from individual people to overall society, and the region's approach to and investment into disaster risk management more broadly," he said.

Forty percent of people surveyed in Southeast Asia said they had experienced a natural disaster in the past five years, while a similar number 36% in Southern Asia said the same. But 67% of Southeast Asians felt among the best prepared to protect their families and 62% had emergency plans, while Southern Asians felt less ready, with 49% and 29% respectively. Respondents from North

America, which is significantly less disaster-prone than Southeast Asia, said they only felt slightly less

prepared, while those in Northern and Western Europe were in the middle of the pack. □



Rescuers carry the body of a victim of a flash flood in Tanah Datar, West Sumatra, Indonesia, on May 13, 2024.

Associated Press

Venezuelan opposition leader rejects Brazil's idea of redoing Venezuela's presidential vote

By **GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA**

Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado on Thursday rejected a proposal from Brazil's president that Venezuela hold a new presidential election following the contested results of last month's vote.

Her comments came shortly after Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said that he still doesn't recognize Nicolás Maduro as the winner of last month's presidential election in Venezuela, and that his counterpart could call for a new vote "if he has good sense." U.S. President Joe Biden also expressed support for new elections. Lula said that Maduro still owes an explanation to Brazilians and the rest of the world.

Machado said during a virtual press conference with Argentine media that redoing the election would be "an insult" to the people, and she asked if second election were held and Maduro still didn't accept the results, "do we go for a third one?"

Brazil is by far South America's largest nation and shares one of Venezuela's longest land borders. Unlike



Opposition presidential candidate Edmundo Gonzalez, right, and opposition leader Maria Corina Machado join hands during a press conference the day after the election in Caracas, Venezuela, Monday, July 29, 2024.

many other nations that have either recognized Maduro or González as the winner, the governments of Brazil, Colombia and Mexico have taken a more neutral stance by neither rejecting nor accepting it when Venezuela's electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner at the ballot box.

"Maduro still has six months left in his term. He is the president regardless of the election. If he has good

sense, he could call upon the people of Venezuela, perhaps even call for new elections, create an electoral committee and allow observers from around the world to monitor," Lula said in an interview with Radio T. In a joint statement, the three countries called on Venezuela's electoral body to release tens of thousands of vote tally sheets, considered the ultimate proof of results.

Under Lula, the country has

been an important mediator, including the Barbados Agreement reached in October, when Maduro's administration and political opposition reached an agreement on a new election that triggered relief from U.S. sanctions.

Celso Amorim, Lula's closest international adviser and former foreign relations minister, went to Caracas in July to monitor the election. Speaking to a Senate committee Thursday morn-

ing, Amorim said that a new election would need to be verified in a solid and robust manner.

Venezuelan law allows for another vote whenever the National Electoral Council or judicial authorities annul an election found to be fraudulent or whose outcome was impossible to determine.

The new election must take place within six to 12 months under the same conditions as the annulled vote and the same candidates must appear on the ballot.

Logistics, laws and costs aside, a new election would be a risky gamble for Maduro and his allies as July's vote and subsequent protests showed they have lost support across the country and can no longer bank on a cadre of die-hard supporters, known as "Chavistas," as well as public employees and others whose businesses or employment depend on the state to comfortably beat opponents.

Although electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner of the highly anticipated election, they have yet to produce detailed voting tallies to back up their claim. □

Associated Press

Sweden reports 1st case of more infectious form of mpox first identified in Congo



State epidemiologist Magnus Gisslén, from left, Olivia Wigzell, acting director general of the Public Health Agency and Social minister Jakob Forssmed give a press conference to inform about the situation regarding mpox, in Stockholm, Sweden, Thursday Aug. 15, 2024.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Swedish health officials said Thursday they have identified the first case of a person with the more infectious form of mpox first seen in eastern Congo, a day after the World Health Organization declared the outbreaks there and elsewhere in Africa to be a global emergency. The Swedish public health agency said in a statement the patient recently sought health care in Stockholm.

"In this case a person has been infected during a stay in the part of Africa where there is a major outbreak of (the more infectious mpox)," the agency said.

Magnus Gisslen, a state epidemiologist with the Swedish health agency, said the person had been treated and given "rules of conduct."

"The fact that a patient with mpox is treated in the country does not affect the risk to the general population," Swedish officials said, adding that experts estimate that risk

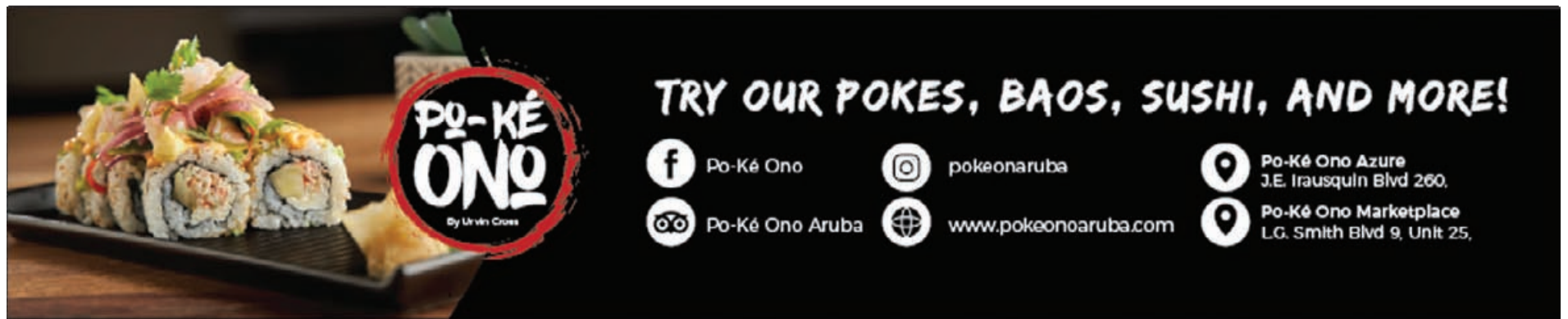
to be "very low." They said, however, that occasional imported cases may continue to occur.

Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of the deadlier form of mpox, which can kill up to 10% of people, in a Congolese mining town that they feared might spread more easily. Mpox mostly spreads via close contact with infected people, including through sex.

WHO said there have been more than 14,000 cases and 524 deaths in more than a dozen countries across Africa this year, which already exceed last year's figures.

So far, more than 96% of all cases and deaths are in a single country Congo.

Given the resources in Sweden and other rich countries to stop mpox, scientists suspect that if new outbreaks linked to Congo are to be identified, transmission could be stopped relatively quickly. □



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Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called *Did you know about...?*, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is *placa*. Cents are called *cen* (pronounced: *seng*), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called *Dos placa*; 10-cent coins were called *debchi*; 25-cent coins were called *diez placa* and the 50-cent coin was once called *Yotin* (pronounced: *jo-teen*). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called *placa too*. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teach-



er, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a *Turtuga blanco* (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the *Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins*, a coral motif, and the symbols of *Cas Floria* (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called *Shoshoro*. The birds *Trupiaal*, *Shoco*, rock drawings, and the symbols of

Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a *Purun di ceramica* (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the *Cododo* (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), *Cangreu di tera* (land crab), *Willem III Tower*, and again the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called *Banana di rif*. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the *Yuwana* (Iguana), *Aloe*, *Toteki* (lizard), the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the *Baile di cinta* (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin


There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the *Dornasol* and the *Warawara*—both local birds, along with the symbols of *Cas Floria* with a piece of mosaic, the *Tuna cactus* plant, and the *Caha di orgel* (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word “florin” supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word “florino”, both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □


Source: *Placa, placa, placa* by the National Library of Aruba





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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors



Mr. Gerald Herrera Jr from Yardville New Jersey, United States.
New Jersey, United States.

Mr. Marcello Herrera from Yardville Mr. Jorgino Willems representing

the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's beaches.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "All our friends at Divi Village"
- "The pools and happy hours at the beach bar"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in

length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors

can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored a loyal visitor at Casa Del Mar Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing a Emerald Ambassador of Aruba. The honoree was respectfully honored with a certificate for his years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honoree was:

Emerald Ambassador
Mr. Joseph Pellino from Carmel New York, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Casa Del Mar Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented him with gifts, and thanked him for choosing Aruba as his favorite vacation destination, as his home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honoree was:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beaches & weather.
- Aruba's culture & food.
- "Arubans makes you feel as you are part of their family"
- "Since I came to Aruba with my parents at the age 11, we've made it our family vacation spot for 4 generations"



On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our

sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for his continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Dorado", a common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Dorado.

Dorado has many different names it can be referred to. Dral, Dorao,

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our "Dorado"

Dral, Drado, are some of them in Papiamentu. In English, it is also called Mahi Mahi, Dolphinfinch, or Dorado. It's a good example to reflect on why there can be many names. The same fish becomes known by different common names, why? Common names come only when a group of people, to understand each other, assign a name to a fish. Mahi Mahi, for example, comes from Hawaii and means "very strong". Dorado is based on Spanish and refers to the golden yellow color that the fish shines with under the sun. Why it's called Dolphinfinch in English is not well defined and while there are several stories around this, none have been confirmed.

Dorado is found in all tropical to subtropical oceans around the world. Dorado is very popular both for recreational fishing and for consump-

tion. It is known among fishermen as an exciting catch and a fish that puts up a good fight. Its meat is very good for consumption and it is also commercially fished for that reason.

They grow very fast, up to 2.7 inches (almost 7 cm) per week. They can live up to a maximum of 5 years although very few reach that age. Most become adults within 1 year but many become reproductive after just 5 or 6 months and reproduce very quickly too.

They live in open water on the surface most of the time. Many fish seek them around sushi lines or floating objects on the sea. Often you will find a group landing together and if you keep a male on the line, often the others will stay close or can keep the group interested by giving shrimp or squid.

Description:

Dorado has a distinctive body. It has a large tail and its long, flat body ends in a large blunt head. Its color of yellow and green or blue makes it immediately recognizable, even with small variations in these colors.

Dorado has clear differences between adult females and males. The male is larger and can easily reach 50 to 80 pounds and has a much flatter head compared to the female. Therefore, male Dorados are also called "bull Dorado".

Dorado can be found in our waters around the island all year round, but there are periods when it is easier to find than others.

Source: The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 1)

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4



exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, espe-

cially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! ☐



Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko



The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Kododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba,



meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Kododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole



The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

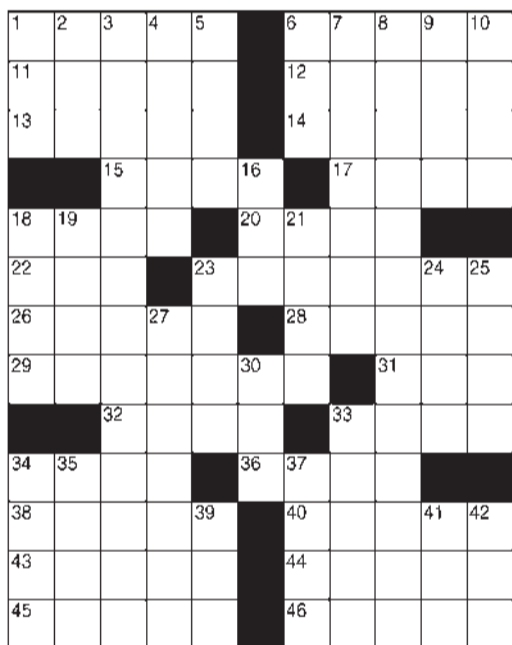
- 1 Locker room need
- 6 Party givers
- 11 "Skyfall" singer
- 12 Foreword
- 13 Monster
- 14 Letter stroke
- 15 X in a letter
- 17 Pirate's take
- 18 Track event
- 20 Hormuz's nation
- 22 German cry
- 23 Counter cleaners
- 26 "This too — pass"
- 28 Joe of "Goodfellas"
- 29 Emma, for one
- 31 Great weight
- 32 Pinnacle
- 33 Gaggle sound
- 34 Guitar accessory
- 36 Quick cut
- 38 Those opposed
- 40 Be of use
- 43 Play part
- 44 Pilgrimage site

DOWN

- 45 Private's boss
- 46 Grill waste
- 1 Keyboard key
- 2 Pindar work
- 3 Spineless quality
- 4 Cow of ads
- 5 "Why don't we!"
- 6 That guy's
- 7 Like some rural bridges
- 8 Ability to handle unpleasant tasks
- 9 Jazz combo
- 10 Cushy
- 16 Tentative taste
- 18 Reckless
- 19 Massage target
- 21 Rappelling need
- 23 Svelte
- 24 Bus. sch. course
- 25 Kitchen fixture
- 27 Securing, in a way
- 30 Court divider
- 33 Humming homes
- 34 Fail to fail
- 35 Machu Picchu native
- 37 Avatar of Vishnu
- 39 Catch sight of
- 41 Sculpting medium
- 42 — Palmas



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

FNGAG'U WD KAGYFGA KORF
FNYW FNOWBOWK FNYF TDE
NYJ UDLG OLQYVF DW FNG
MDAZJ, RDA FNG HGFFGA.

— KZDAOY UFGOWGL

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU PRIORITIZE YOURSELF, YOU ARE GOING TO SAVE YOURSELF. — GABRIELLE UNION

Cruise ship Schedule: August 6 - 27 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	06	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	20.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	13.00	23.00	I	1
WED	07	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	13	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
THU	14	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	08.00	18.00	C	1
WED	20	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	27	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7

August's supermoon kicks off four months of lunar spectacles. Here's how to watch

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.
(AP) — The first of four supermoons this year rises next week, providing tantalizing views of Earth's constant companion. Stargazers can catch the first act Monday as the full moon inches a little closer than usual, making it appear slightly bigger and brighter in the night sky. "I like to think of the supermoon as a good excuse to start looking at the moon more regularly," said Noah Petro, project scientist for NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.

August's supermoon kicks off a string of lunar spectacles. September's supermoon will coincide with a partial lunar eclipse. October's will be the year's closest approach, and November's will round out the year.

What makes a moon so super?

More a popular term than a scientific one, a supermoon occurs when a full lunar phase syncs up with an especially close swing around Earth. This usually happens only three or four times a year and consecutively, given the moon's constantly shifting, oval-shaped orbit.

A supermoon obviously isn't bigger, but it can appear that way, although scientists say the difference



The moon rises through clouds over the skyline of lower Manhattan in this view from West Orange, N.J., Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2023, during a supermoon period.

Associated Press

can be barely perceptible. "Unless you have looked at a lot of full moons or compare them in images, it is hard to notice the difference, but people should try," Petro said in an email.

How do supermoons compare?

There's a quartet of supermoons this year.

The first will be 224,917 miles (361,970 kilometers) away. The next will be nearly 3,000 miles (4,484 kilometers) closer the night of Sept. 17 into the following morning. A partial lunar eclipse will also unfold that night, visible in much of the Americas, Africa and Europe as the Earth's shadow falls on the moon, resem-

bling a small bite.

October's supermoon will be the year's closest at 222,055 miles (357,364 kilometers) from Earth, followed by November's supermoon at a distance of 224,853 miles (361,867 kilometers).

What's in it for me?

Scientists point out that only the keenest observers can discern the subtle differences. It's easier to detect the change in brightness a supermoon can be

30% brighter than average. With the U.S. and other countries ramping up lunar exploration with landers and eventually astronauts, the moon beckons brighter than ever. □

ARUBA
TODAY

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WEEK 32
Ambassador unit
(one bedroom)
Price range: \$2,400.00 - \$2,500.00
Presidential suites
(two bedrooms)
Price range: \$8,760.00

WEEK 33
Ambassador unit
(one bedroom)
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Presidential suites
(two bedrooms)
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Oranjestad:

Oduber : Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto: Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes	Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club	Tel. 525 2672

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One Tech Tip: Don't want chatbots using your conversations for AI training? Some let you opt out

By **KELVIN CHAN**
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Be careful what you tell a chatbot. Your conversation might be used to improve the artificial intelligence system that it's built on. If you ask ChatGPT for advice about your embarrassing medical condition, beware that anything you disclose could be used to tweak OpenAI's algorithms that underpin its AI models. The same goes if, for example, you upload a sensitive company report to Google's Gemini to summarize for a meeting. It's no secret that the AI models underpinning popular chatbots have been trained on enormous troves of information scraped from the internet, like blog posts, news articles and social media comments, so they can predict the next word when coming up with a response to your question.

This training was often done without consent, raising copyright concerns, and, experts say, given the opaque nature of AI models, it's probably too late to remove any of your data that might have been used.

But what you can do going forward is stop any of your chatbot interactions from being used for AI training. It's not always possible but some companies give users the option:

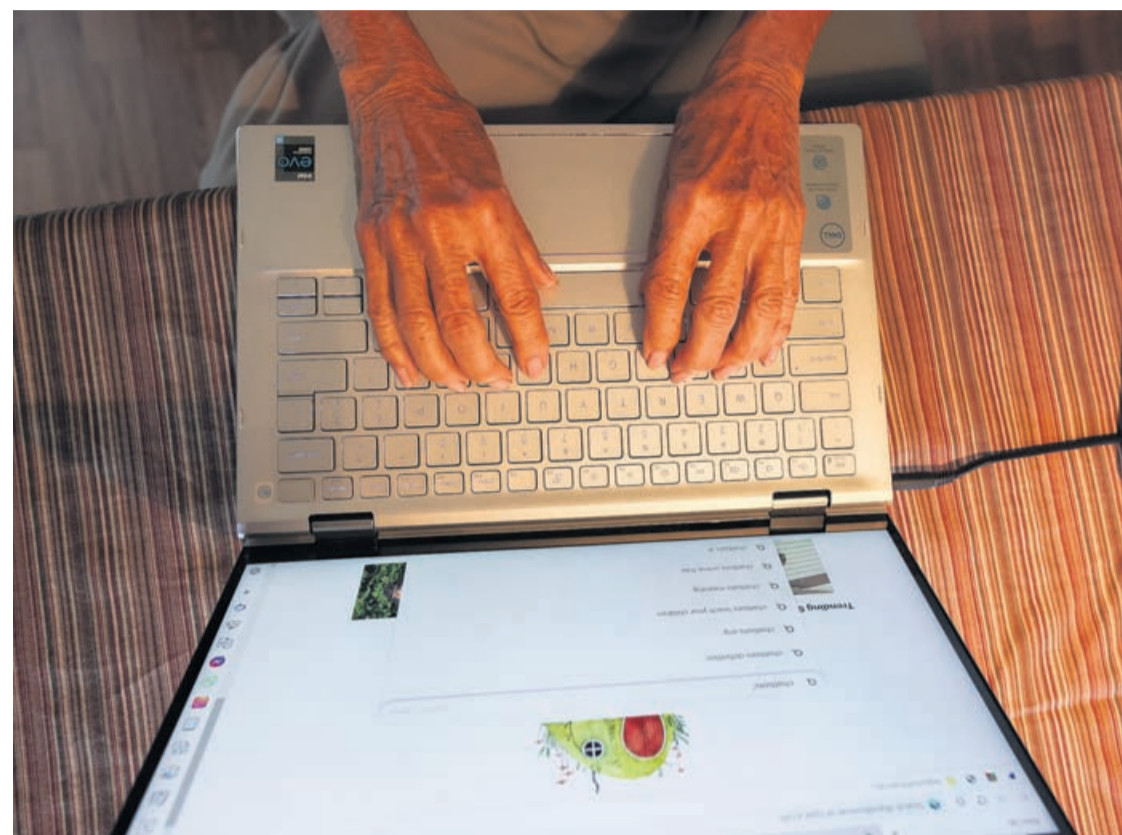
Google Gemini

Google keeps your conversations with its Gemini chatbot to train its machine learning systems. For users 18 or older, chats are kept by default for 18 months, though that can be adjusted in settings. Human reviewers can also access the conversations to improve the quality of the generative AI models that power Gemini. Google warns users not to tell Gemini any confidential information or give it any data they don't want a human reviewer to see.

To opt out of this, go to the Gemini website and click the Activity tab. Click the Turn Off button and from

the drop down menu, you can choose to stop recording all future chats or delete all your previous conversa-

tions. The company warns that any conversations that have been selected for human review won't be deleted and are stored separately. Whether you choose to turn your activity off or leave it on, Google also says all chats with Gemini will be kept for 72 hours to "provide the service and process any feedback."



Barbara Winston uses a computer at her home in Northbrook, Ill., on Sunday, June 30, 2024, several days after taking an introduction to artificial intelligence class at a local senior center.

Associated Press

Gemini's help page also details the process for iPhone and Android app users.

Meta AI

Meta has an AI chatbot that's been butting into conversations on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, powered by its open-source AI language models. The company says those models are trained on information shared on its platforms including social media posts and photos and caption info, but not your private messages with friends and family. They're also trained on publicly available information scraped from other parts of the web by "third parties." Not everyone can opt out. People in the 27-nation Eu-

ropean Union and the United Kingdom, which have strict privacy regulations, have the right to object to their information being used to train Meta's AI systems. From the Facebook privacy page, click Other Policies and Articles from the list on the left side, then click the section on generative AI. Scroll down to find a link to a form where you can object.

There's a box to fill out with additional information to support your request, but no details about what you should say. I wrote that I was exercising my right as a U.K. resident to withdraw consent for my personal information to be used for AI training. I received an email almost instantly saying Meta had reviewed the request and would honor my objection.

"This means your request will be applied going forward," it said. People in the United States and other countries without national data privacy laws don't have this option. Meta's privacy hub does link to a form where users can request that their data scraped by third parties not be used to "develop and improve AI at Meta."

But the company warns it won't automatically fulfill requests and will review them based on local laws.

The process itself is cumbersome, requiring users to provide the chatbot request that produced a response with their personal info and a screenshot of it.

Microsoft Copilot

There's no way to option to opt out for personal users. The best you can do is delete your interactions with the Copilot chatbot by going to your Microsoft account's settings and privacy page. Look for a drop down menu labeled Copilot interaction history or Copilot activity history to find the delete button.

OpenAI's ChatGPT

If you've got an OpenAI account, go to the settings menu on your web browser and then to the Data controls section, where you can disable a setting to "Improve the model for everyone." If you don't have an account, click on the small question mark at the bot-

tom right of the web page, then click on settings, and you'll get the same option to opt out of AI training. Mobile users can make the same choice on the ChatGPT Android and iOS apps. OpenAI says on its data controls help page that when users opt out, their conversations will still appear in the chat history but won't be used for training. These temporary chats will be kept for 30 days and reviewed only if needed to monitor for abuse.

Grok

Elon Musk's X quietly activated a setting that allows the billionaire Tesla CEO's AI chatbot Grok to be trained on data from the social media platform. This setting has been turned on by default and allows Grok to use data including your posts, "interactions, inputs, and results" for training and "fine-tuning."

The change wasn't publicized and only came to light after X users spotted it in July. To opt out, you need to go to settings on X's desktop browser version, then click "Privacy and safety," scroll down to "Grok" and then untick the box. You can also delete your conversation history with Grok if you have any. There's no way to do it from the X mobile app, unfortunately.

Claude

Anthropic AI says its chatbot Claude is not trained on personal data. It also does not by default use questions or requests to train its AI models. However, users can give "explicit permission" for a specific response to be used in training by giving it a thumbs up or thumbs down or by emailing the company. Conversations that are flagged for a safety review could also be used to train the company's systems to better enforce its rules. □

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Torrid NL West is baseball's hottest division race with Dodgers, Padres and Diamondbacks

By DAVID BRANDT
AP Baseball Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The Arizona Diamondbacks are in the midst of a stretch that most big-league clubs can only dream about, winners of six straight games, 20 of 25 since the All-Star break and 30 of 40 since late June.

Certainly, that should be enough to take control of the NL West. Right? Not even close.

The NL West is home to three of the hottest teams in baseball, including the Diamondbacks, San Diego Padres and Los Angeles Dodgers. As pennant races around baseball heat up with approximately 40 games remaining, the one out west looks like the best with sluggers like Shohei Ohtani, Manny Machado and Ketel Marte duking it out on a nightly basis.

"We're very aware of it," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of his team's shrinking lead last week. "I'd be lying if I said no one's watching the scoreboard and appreciating how good the rest of the teams in our division are playing. "That just puts the onus on us to play good



Arizona Diamondbacks' Ketel Marte acknowledges fans as he celebrates after his solo-home run against the Philadelphia Phillies during the first inning of a baseball game Saturday, Aug 10, 2024, in Phoenix.

baseball." The Dodgers who have won the division in 10 of the past 11 years looked well on their way to another division title by mid-June. They have arguably the best lineup in baseball with Ohtani, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman, and Tyler Glasnow leads a rotation that is solid.

But Betts missed 1 1/2 months with a broken left hand and the Dodgers

weren't quite the same in his absence. That gave the D-backs and Padres the opening they need to make a move.

And move they did. The Padres and the D-backs have been on fire since the All-Star break. San Diego has a 19-4 record and Arizona is 20-5.

The Dodgers aren't playing poorly with a 15-9 record during that span, but

they're struggling to hold their division lead.

The Padres (69-53) and D-backs (69-53) were just 2 1/2 games behind the Dodgers (71-50) as of Wednesday night.

Buckle up.

"It's fun to be a part of, a lot of hard work goes into it," D-backs slugger Joc Pederson said of his team's success.

"Everybody comes to the field every

day prepared to do their thing to help the team win. It's a powerful thing when you've got all the guys pulling on the same string."

The Dodgers are still loaded with talent. Betts has returned from his injury with a flourish, injecting the lineup with his power-speed combo. Los Angeles added right-hander Jack Flaherty in a trade and three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw is back, joining Glasnow and Gavin Stone in the rotation.

"I think the biggest thing for us is we're getting some guys back," Kershaw said. "We're getting our lineup the way we want it. We're getting some guys starter-wise, reliever-wise, everything we're having our team look like what we want our team to look like."

"I think you'll see us kind of start to take off here pretty soon." They better, because the Padres and D-backs are in hot pursuit.

The Padres have been one of the most frustrating teams in baseball the past few seasons, loaded with high-priced talent often without the matching results. But this version has been formidable. □

Associated Press

Jordan Chiles says panel's call for her to return Olympic bronze is 'unjust' and 'significant blow'

By The Associated Press

American gymnast Jordan Chiles called an arbitration panel's decision that she must return the bronze medal she was awarded in the floor exercise at the Paris Olympics "unjust" and a "significant blow" in a message posted on social media Thursday.

The International Olympic Committee, in light of the decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, announced it would reallocate the bronze to Ana Barbosu of Romania.

It was thought Chiles had won the bronze after judges changed her score following an appeal by Team USA coach Cecile Landi. Romania successfully protested to the CAS that Landi's appeal was not made within one minute of Chiles' score being posted, and the panel ruled Saturday the bronze should go to Barbosu.

"I have no words," Chiles wrote in an Instagram post. "This decision feels unjust

and comes as a significant blow, not just to me, but to everyone who has championed my journey. To add to the heartbreak, the unprompted racially driven attacks on social media are wrong and extremely hurtful. I've poured my heart and soul into this sport and I am so proud to represent my culture and my country." USA Gymnastics has said it will continue efforts to let Chiles keep the medal. The sport's governing body in the United States disputes Romania's claim that Landi's appeal came 4 seconds too late, saying Sunday it submitted video evidence to CAS that showed Landi first appealed 13 seconds before the deadline. "I am now confronted with one of the most challenging moments of my career," Chiles posted. "Believe me when I say I have had many. I will approach the challenge as I have others and will make every effort to ensure that justice is done. □



Jordan Chiles, of the United States, and Simone Biles, of the United States, celebrate after the women's artistic gymnastics individual floor finals in Bercy Arena at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Monday, Aug. 5, 2024, in Paris, France.

Associated Press



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Jets QB Rodgers shines in two-minute drill. Panthers avoid key injuries in heated joint practice

By **STEVE REED**
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers overcame a slow start to lead a well-executed touchdown drive during a two-minute drill, and the Carolina Panthers appear to have avoided two key injuries during a heated joint practice on Thursday.

After throwing two interceptions early in practice, Rodgers began to find his form on the Jets final offensive possession, completing three passes before picking up a defensive pass interference on a deep ball to Garrett Wilson. On the ensuing play, Rodgers capped the drive with a short TD pass to Wilson.

"We started slow, which can't happen, but you have to find a way to bounce back and finish strong and I think we did

that," said Wilson, who was targeted three times on the touchdown drive.

"I feel like we got better

today."

The Panthers had a scare when guard Robert Hunt, who came to Carolina

from Miami as a free agent after signing a five-year, \$100 million contract, appeared to injure his knee

early in practice and was carted to the sideline.

But Hunt returned to finish practice.

Later on, Panthers starting running back Chuba Hubbard was involved in a collision with Jets safety Chuck Clark after appearing to slip on the grass, leaving him exposed to a big hit. He remained on the field for several minutes holding his knee.

"We had big concerns when Chuba went down, but the initial testing was pretty good," Panthers coach Dave Canales said of Hubbard, who did not return to practice. "So they are going to follow up there."

Miles Sanders and Mike Boone received added reps at running back after Hubbard went down.

Things got heated shortly after the teams went to 11-on-11 drills. □



New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers drops back to throw a pass during an NFL football joint practice with the Carolina Panthers Thursday, Aug. 15, 2024, in Charlotte, N.C.

Associated Press